

The Zoomer's Warmer Welcome by orphan_account

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Language: English

Characters: Billy Hargrove, Dustin Henderson, Lucas Sinclair, Maxine "Max" Mayfield, Mike Wheeler, Will Byers

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Summary:

A season 2 AU where Mike gives up hope on Eleven, who lives with Hopper in secret for good, The Upside Down and The Mind Flayer are sealed away for good, and most importantly...

Max slaps Mike in the face.

1. A New Challenger Approaches

(New Scene: Mike's Basement)

"El, are you there? El? It's me, it's Mike. It's day 352, 7:40 PM, I'm still here. If you're out there, say something...or give me a sign, I won't, I won't even say anything, I just..."

A pause.

"I can't keep doing this." I mumbled to myself, turning off the walkie talkie. I had to make myself move on. She's never coming back.

(New Scene: Classroom)

"Class...please welcome, all the way from sunny California, the latest passenger to join us on our curiosity voyage, Maxine!" Mister Clarke exclaimed.

"It's Max." She corrected him.

"Sorry?" He questioned.

"Nobody calls me Maxine, it's Max." Max finished.

"Ah, well...all aboard, Max!" He said, trying to bring back the cheery mood.

Max walked to an empty seat, and I was the one who turned to look back at her.

(New Scene: Lunchroom)

A few kids had already gotten up to talk to her at this point, but it seemed like I finally had an opportunity to talk to her alone. I pretended I was getting some more food, but conveniently found

myself passing by her table.

"Oh, hey, my name's Mike Wheeler. I forgot to mention I like the outfit." I said.

"It's just a jacket and jeans, but thanks." She said, in a tone I couldn't exactly decipher.

"Uh, can I sit here?" I asked. She shrugged. I took that as a yes. "So, what are your, uh, hobbies?" I added.

"I skateboard, hang out at the arcade, and get in fights with my brother." She replied.

"Cool." I said.

"What do you do?" She questioned.

"Oh, I just play Dungeons & Dragons, hang out in the arcade, and get in fights with my sister." I answered.

She simply nodded.

"When do you usually go to the arcade?" I asked.

"Why do you wanna know? To stalk me?" She questioned, possibly jokingly? She's hard to figure out.

"Just curious." I answered.

"Do you wanna hang out with me or something?" She asked.

"Yeah, that would be cool." I said, trying to answer as casually as I could.

"Well, I just go whenever I want, but today I'm going to practice skating at 7 PM, if you wanna race me, not that you know how." She said.

"You don't know that I don't know how to skate." I shot back.

"I know you would have mentioned it to impress a girl you just met when you mentioned that you can relate to EVERYTHING else I can do." She retaliated.

"Well, maybe I just wanted to add something else that makes me different than you."

"Sadly, I can already tell that you want to be JUST like me."

"Really? I don't have to be when I'm already better than you."

"If you're better than me, then prove it tonight, or just show up to eat my dust."

"Maybe I will."

"Or maybe you'll show up just to drool all over me, and I'll ride all over you."

"You'd like that, wouldn't you?"

A pause. She leaned into my ear.

"If you show up and I beat you at the race, you are SO dead for saying that."

The bell rang. She walked away and gave me a look that I didn't quite understand yet.

(New Scene: Inside Lucas' House)

"..and that's why I need to borrow your skateboard." I finished explaining to Lucas.

He gave me a look and gently pushed a skateboard into my chest.

"Do you need a few lessons?" Lucas unenthusiastically asked.

(New Scene: Outside Lucas' House)

"You need more momentum than that." Lucas said, with a mixture of frustration and amusement.

I attempted to get up a small hill, but continued to struggled.

"Back away, pick up speed first...are you even listening to me?" Lucas said...at least I think he did. I wasn't paying attention.

"You're gonna get beat up by a girl, and Dustin's gonna laugh his ass off." Lucas said, checking his watch. "Also..." I cut him off.

"I should get going." I said, checking mine at the same time.

"Good luck not getting killed, man." Lucas said, putting a hand on my shoulder.

(New Scene: Skatepark)

"Well, well, well. Look who didn't chicken out." Max said, putting her arms out dramatically.

"Yeah, let's get this over with." I said with a sigh.

"Okay, see that pole over there?" Max said, pointing to pole at the end of the sidewalk. "Whoever makes it there first..." She started.

"...there first wins." I said, at the same time as her. She gave me the look again.

We lined up at the beginning of the sidewalk, and Max started to count. "3...2...1..."

We were tied for about, I don't know...less than a second? She zoomed ahead of me, and I got less than halfway there before she finished. She turned around and laughed, starting to walk towards me. I stopped, figuring there was no point in finishing.

"WOW, nice job." She said, as I picked up my skateboard.

"WOAH, AND we have a plot twist of the century on our hands." She added.

"What?" I questioned.

"You don't know that I don't know how to skate." She said in a mocking tone, taking the skateboard in my hands, and turning it around to reveal Lucas had written his name in marker on a piece of tape on the other side.

"Shit." I muttered to myself.

"So, what should your punishment be, hmm? Should I have my brother beat you up?" She asked.

"Oh, suddenly you can't do it yourself, can you?" I said, mockingly.

She slapped me in the face, hard.

"I'll let you off easy this time with that, Wheeler. See you around." She said, skating away.

2. Rematch

(New Scene: Classroom)

"...in the face?!" Dustin said, laughing. Lucas nodded, trying not to laugh.

"This is why I don't trust my secrets with you." I said to him.

"You never said it was a secret." Lucas said, and the bell went off again, making Lucas and Dustin walk away.

"Don't worry about them. They're just a bunch of sexist jerks." Will said, making me quickly turn behind me, forgetting he was there listening too.

"...thanks, Will." I said with a smile.

(New Scene: Lunchroom)

I walked into the lunchroom a bit late, worried about what I would see. Luckily, it wasn't what I expected. Max was still alone, there was no group of girls laughing with her about my misfortune.

I sat next to her, and she looked at me, confused.

"Why are you here, to challenge me to another duel? Maybe Dig Dug, perhaps?" She asked.

"No, first off, I saw your high score, which I can't even BEGIN to know how you got, and second, I just wanted to talk." I replied.

"I didn't know you were that desperate to talk to girls." She said.

"I just...prefer you to others. You seem cool." I said.

"You like girls who slap you in the face?" She asked.

"I guess so." I responded, with a shrug.

"...weird." She said, raising an eyebrow.

"What movies do you like?" I asked.

"I like horror movies, but ones that feel real, not so over the top, like Halloween." She replied.

"Speaking of Halloween, do you have anyone to trick-or-treat with?" I asked.

"Uh, no, but-" She said, but I cut her off.

"I know all the best places. I usually go with Lucas, Dustin, and Will, but I feel like you shouldn't miss out on all the full-sized candy bars. I'm just trying to help out." I said,
She gave me a look for a moment. "Fine, where do I meet you?" She finally spit out.

(New Scene: Hallways)

(Temporary Max POV)

"...hi, Max, I'm Dustin, and this is..." Dustin was cut off.

"Lucas." Lucas finished.

"Yeah, I know. Mike mentioned you." I replied.

"Oh, cool. So, uh, we were talking last night, and, you're new here, so you probably don't have any friends to take you trick-or-treating. So, uh, we were thinking...that it would be okay if you come with us." Dustin asked.

"By us, do you mean you, Lucas, and Mike?" She asked.

"Yeah, and Will...unless-" I cut Dustin off.

"Mike already asked me this, and I said yes." I said.

Lucas and Dustin exchanged glances.

"Did you tell him?" Dustin whispered to Lucas.

"No, did you tell Will?" Lucas asked.

"Well, anyways, we know where to get full-sized candy-" I cut Dustin off once again.

"Mike said all of this to me already." I said, getting annoyed at the repetitiveness of the situation.

"Okay, so, that means you'll come?" Dustin asked.

I simply rolled my eyes and started to walk away.

"We're meeting at the Maple Street-" Dustin started.

"She knows if Mike told her already, man." Lucas said, elbowing him in the side, making him stop.

(New Scene: The Other Side Of Maple Street)

(Back To Mike's POV)

A figure jumped out at me from the bushes, and I flinched, and gasped.

The figure pulled off the Michael Myers mask, and revealed itself to be Max, laughing.

"...wait, where are the rest of your friends?" She asked.

"They're somewhere around here. I went off to look for you." I clarified.

"Oh, so you made up an excuse to be alone with me." She said, teasing.

"Why would I want to be alone with someone who hates me?" I asked her.

"You tell me." She asked back.

She started to walk off, so I picked up my pace to follow her.

"What are you expecting to gain from this, exactly?" She asked me.

"Gain from what?" I asked back.

"Talking to me all the time. Are you expecting me to be your best friend after slapping you in the face?" She asked me.

"Can you stop bringing that up?" I asked her.

"Why? Because it reminds you that I'll never be your girlfriend?" She questioned.

"You wish." I spat back.

"Apologize." Max said, stopping, turning to face me.

"Why should I?" I asked her.

"Because I know you will." She said, giving me that look again.

A pause.

"I'm sorry." I said, defeated.

"Good boy, Mikey. Maybe if you're lucky, you'll even get another slap in the-" She started to say in a mocking, sweet tone, but I cut her off.

"Don't finish that." I said, feeling some weird new emotion I couldn't comprehend.

"Or what?" She snapped back.

"Or I'll...uh..." I stuttered.

She got a bit closer to my face.

"Or what, Mike?" She said, whispering.

My heart was suddenly pounding.

"THERE YOU ARE, MIKE!" Dustin called out to me.

Will ran up to me.

"We were worried about you. You know everyone's nervous about people going missing ever since...you know...I did." He said, looking up at me with puppy dog eyes.

On the other hand, I felt like a wolf, ready to devour inconvenient timing.

3. Comprehending Emotions

(New Scene: Mike's Basement)

What was I even feeling? Fear? Lust? A combination of the two?

"It's your move, Mike." Will said, snapping me out of my thoughts for a moment.

I rolled the dice and said my moves without focusing. I keep finding myself zoned out ever since that day. What was it about that girl?

(New Scene: Lunchroom)

"...and there he is again." Max announced to nobody but herself.

"I know, you couldn't wait." I replied. "Remember how you said you wanted to play Dig Dug against me?" I said, before she could make a snarky comment.

"Vaguely." She answered.

"How about we play Super Mario Bros? I'm better at that." I suggested.

"...and where would we play that? At your house?" She asked.

"...well, the thing is, I don't have an NES, I played it at Dustin's house, so we could play it there...wait...shit." I said, remembering something.

"What?" She questioned.

"Dustin sold his copy for some other stupid game..." I said.

A pause.

"I have it." Max finally said.

"Really?" I said, surprised.

"Yeah, but then you'd have to deal with my brother, and I don't know if I want you in my house." She said.

"You could always loan me your copy, and we could go to Dustin's house." I suggested.

Another pause.

She sighed and pulled out a pen and paper from her backpack.

(New Scene: Max's House: Downstairs)

I knocked on the door, and someone that definitely wasn't Max opened the door. He looked at me for a moment.

"MAX! THERE'S SOME RANDOM KID THAT'S LOOKING AT ME LIKE AN IDIOT AT THE DOOR!" He called upstairs.

"ONE SECOND!" She replied back.

"ONE! THERE! YOUR SECOND IS OVER!" He said, leaving me alone at the door. I paused for a moment and walked in before the door closed.

"Excuse me, who are you?" I asked.

"Who are YOU?" He questioned back.

"Mike." I answered.

He started to laugh. "You're the one who she slapped in the face? Why are you here?" He said.

"What's your name?" I repeated.

"Billy. Just up upstairs, she's probably just staring at boy magazines again." He said, smiling from his own amusement.

(New Scene: Max's House: Upstairs)

I walked upstairs and knocked on her already opened door.

"I'm not ready, but come in anyways." She said.

I walked in the room, and saw her laying on her bed as if she had just woken up.

"It's already in there. Just turn it on." She said, slowly pushing herself up into a sitting position.

This was a weird position for me. I've never been in another girl's room before...well, besides Nancy's room, I guess. I found it hard

to...function in general, I guess. I turned the console on, and grabbed us both controllers.

"You're so weird." She said with a laugh, starting a round.

"Why?" I managed to ask.

"You're just...devoted to flirting with me, despite me, well, hating you, if you couldn't tell." She clarified.

I stayed silent, watching her play.

"I literally slapped you in the face." She reminded me for the hundredth time.

I nodded.

"You had to have really enjoyed that." She said,

A pause. She was already passed the first level.

"Well?" She said.

"Yeah." I spit out.

"Yes? You liked the slap?" She asked, with a bit of laughter.

"Yes, Max, I liked it." I said, surprised at what I was able to say.

"...I kind of liked it too." She admitted.

"Well, that's good." I said.

"Why?" She questioned.

"Because I want you to slap me again." I said.

She lost a life, and turned her head to look at me.

"Brace yourself." She said, raising her hand in the air.

(New Scene: Max's House: Downstairs)

(Temporary Billy POV)

I heard a slap, and stormed upstairs.

"What is going on?" I said sternly, looking at Mike.

"It's okay, I...she's fine. I didn't, uh, mind it." Mike said.

I thought for a moment.

"You slapped him again?" I asked Max.

"Yes, but we're fine. We have a, uh, mutual agreement." She said.

I laughed and started to walk back downstairs.

"Weird kids." I muttered to myself.

(New Scene: Lunchroom)

(Back To Mike's POV)

"Look who decided to come back to their own party's table." Dustin said, looking at Mike.

"Yeah, sorry, I was busy finding a new member." I said.

Max walked over to our table to fill the empty seat that's been there ever since Eleven left.

"Wait...I thought you guys hated each other." Lucas questioned.

"We do." Max said.

"Oooohhhhhkay then." Lucas said, confused.

"Everyone, welcome our Zoomer to the party." I said.

"Hey!" Everyone said enthusiastically...besides Will.

"...that's not a thing." Will muttered to himself.